

BELMONT VISION 21 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes, May 6, 2004

Approved July 15, 2004

Members present: Jenny Fallon, Victoria Haase, Matthew Hausmann, Timothy Higgins, Sara Oaklander, Margaret O'Brien, Jennifer Page, Paul Solomon, Diane Stafford, Barry Winston
Also Present: Dolores Keefe
Absent: Joe Greene, Bill Hofmann

7:10 p.m. There being a quorum, Jennifer Page opened the meeting.

1. Administrative: Minutes from March 18, approved as revised; and April 1, accepted as written.
2. Reports and updates
 - 2.1 Belmont Neighbors' Network: Jennifer Page reported the Neighbors' Network plans to present a rose to any couple applying for a marriage license on May 17, in recognition of this historic event. This activity will take place outside the Town Clerk's office.
 - 2.2 Diane Stafford, a newly elected member of the School Committee, was introduced as the new liaison to the Vision 21 Committee.
3. O'Neill 40B (affordable housing) application – There has been a request from Board of Selectmen for comments on this proposal. Jennifer Page led review of the working vision for Belmont future (adopted by Town meeting 4/23/01) as a basis for a reply.
 - 3.1 Tim Higgins, Senior Planner provided a brief report on the proposal by O'Neill:
300 units, 25% affordable for 40 years, less than 50% AMI (area median income)
5 buildings, 4 story height, comprising:
150 units - 2 bedrooms
75 units - 1 bedroom
75 units - 3 bedrooms
All are rental units with none specifically designated for the senior population. If the application is approved by MassDevelopment (the lending agency) it will be submitted to Belmont Zoning Board of Appeals for a Comprehensive Permit. A public hearing process will take place.

3.2 Jennifer walked the members through the Vision statement, posing the question, “How does proposed development support the following statements w/in the Vision?”

- “Protect beauty and character of our natural settings be an environmentally responsible community and conserve our natural habitats.”

Discussion:

The proposal has a much larger lot coverage than previously proposed developments, both approved R+D and requested 250 unit of housing.

Points = poor drainage, loss of habitat for animals and plants, loss of silver maple forest

Conclusion = The proposal is inconsistent with this statement.

- “Excellent educational opportunities”, “Excellent school system,” “Provide for leaning needs of all residents.”

Discussion:

Overburden neighborhood school. Winn Brook create need for busing

Loss of service currently being offered to students

Rental units can mean more turnover which has an impact of leaning

Points = 3 bedrooms unit – more children

Previous proposals units smaller and seniors included (less children)

Conclusion: The proposal is inconsistent with this statement.

- “Welcoming newcomers,” “Value diversity”

Points = greater ethnic or racial diversity we would need to do more to reach out to residence who are geographically separate easier access to Arlington and Cambridge.

Conclusion: The proposal is consistent with this statement.

- “Plans for future generations”

Points = homes in Belmont right now 9980 / 230 affordable 2.64% (all 300 units will count as affordable).

Conclusion: The proposal is consistent with this statement.

- Fiscal management: “Wise use of financial resources”

Discussion

Income tax generated to pay the Town?

Income tax will be less and will cost the Town more than either of the previous 2 proposals. Money in public services and 75 new students @ 6,000 per pupil for a total of 450 thousand dollars costs to Town may exceed income. Fiscal viability of the project seems problematic, given the soft rental market. Recommend study on rental market.

Conclusion: The proposal is inconsistent with this statement.

- Managing traffic
Points = The proposal will introduce more traffic both cars and bus impact on Cross Street, Lake Street and Route 2 East. People can not walk to anything, no pathway to Alewife T Station (which should be provided for.)
Conclusion: The proposal is inconsistent with this statement.
- “Small Town community atmosphere within a metropolitan area”
Points = The site is an island geographically isolated with no access by foot, bike, car. No public transportation to Belmont.
Conclusion: The proposal is inconsistent with this statement.
- “Comprehensive and integrated regional planning”
Points = This is an independent development with no regional review or connections.
Conclusion: The proposal is inconsistent with this statement.
- “Investing in infrastructure”
Points = The impact on existing infrastructure (water, sewer, storm drain) water department should be carefully evaluated.
Conclusion: The proposal is inconsistent with this statement.
- “Involvement in Town affairs”
Points = island geographically separate rental community will not be as committed to Town affairs.
Conclusion: It cannot be determined if the proposal is consistent with this statement.

Jennifer Page will draft a summary of the discussion points. Vision 21 members will review the draft at 7:45 on May 17 Monday.

Next regular scheduled meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 3, 2004.

Respectfully submitted,

Victoria Haase